

ANNUAL REPORT MARCH 31, 2004

**AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY
33 KELLOGG AVENUE
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS**

Joan Ross Logan, Chair

Peter Jessop, Vice Chair

Judy Collins, Treasurer

Judy Brooks, Assistant Treasurer

Steve Rogers, Member

Donna Crabtree, Executive Director

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33 KELLOGG AVENUE
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS 01002**

ANNUAL REPORT AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Amherst Housing Authority respectfully submits its Annual Report to the citizens of the Town of Amherst, Ms. Jane Gumble, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Secretary's Representative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and State Auditor Joseph DeNucci for the year ending March 31, 2004.

The members and staff of the Amherst Housing Authority reaffirm their continued desire to serve all the citizens of Amherst, including those who reside in the several buildings that the Authority owns and also AHA tenants who reside in privately owned buildings in the Town of Amherst.

Sincerely,

Joan Ross Logan
Chair

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The voters of the Town of Amherst elect four members of the Board at large and the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts appoints one member. All members serve five-year terms. The members establish policies regulating the operation of the Amherst Housing Authority. Regular Board meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday in the community room at Ann Whalen Apartments.

Members of the Amherst Housing Authority Board of Commissioners are:

Commissioner	Term Expiration
Judy Brooks	April 2005
Steve Rogers	April 2007
Joan Ross Logan	April 2007
Peter Jessop	April 2009
Judy Collins	April 2006

At their annual meeting in April, Joan Logan was elected Chair; Peter Jessop, Vice-Chair; Judy Collins Treasurer; and Judy Brooks, Assistant Treasurer.

Peter Jessop was elected to an additional 5-year term in March 2004 and will continue to serve as the Authority's representative on the Community Preservation Act committee. Judy Brooks is the Authority's representative on the Housing Trust Fund sub-committee and Joan Logan is the Authority's legislative liaison. In her capacity as a Board member of the Massachusetts Chapter of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, Donna Crabtree is Chair of the Scholarship Committee, and Vice-Chair of the Leased Housing Committee.

AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY HIGHLIGHTS

In October, the Authority used a combination of Community Preservation funds and a conventional mortgage to purchase the Keet House at 99 Bridge Street. This property was an expiring use tax credit project; the Authority was able, through its purchase, to preserve the building as affordable housing. The units are leased to Section 8 voucher holders who participate in a transitional housing program, Grace House, for young mothers in recovery. A combination of stable housing and support services are allowing high-risk tenants to live in decent affordable housing, to continue with their sobriety program, and to gain additional parenting skills.

With the help of an additional \$123,550.00 in Community Preservation funds, the Authority was able to assist with the development of four units on Tamarack Drive, fund pre-development and site control costs of a vacant parcel on Main Street, and to determine the feasibility of converting two buildings into apartments.

The Authority received a \$22,000.00 grant from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership to assist with pre-development activities on the vacant Main Street property.

The Authority continues to participate in a state-funded pilot program to develop prototypes for modular family housing and anticipates construction of four units on Tamarack Drive this coming year.

The AHA received a capital grant award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the amount of \$31,133.00 for improvements at Watson Farms Apartments.

The Housing Authority revised its Annual Agency Plan with the assistance of a Resident Advisory Committee. The plan includes a mission statement, goals and objectives, and numerous policies and budgets. It is available for public review in the Authority offices, in the Planning Department at Town Hall, and in the Jones Library. The Agency Plan was submitted to the U. S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for approval.

The Authority prepared plans and specifications for new offices on the first floor of Ann Whalen Apartments and signed a contract for the construction of the new spaces.

The AHA continues to improve its existing management, maintenance, and rental assistance programs and to emphasize preventative maintenance.

AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY STAFF

In addition to the actual day-to-day management, maintenance, and administration of the Authority's programs, the AHA staff provides housing referrals and information to the general public and to local and state agencies and boards.

Administrative Personnel

Executive Director	Donna Crabtree
Housing Manager	Nancy Schroeder
Director of Housing Programs	Paula Sayword
Office Manager	Pam Predmore
Section 8 Program Coordinator	Debbie Turgeon
Bookkeeper	Lowell LaPointe
Program Assistant	Juana Trujillo
Housing Inspector	Ed Cutting

Maintenance Personnel

Maintenance Supervisor/Mechanic	Jerry Aldrich
Maintenance Laborer	John Summers
Groundskeeper/Custodian	Dana Glazier

Contract or Grant-Funded Staff

Support Service Coordinator	Eunice Torres
Fee Accountant	Gary DePace
Counsel--State Programs	Christopher Brown, Esq.

AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY HOUSING

NAME OF BUILDING	# OF UNITS	FUNDING TYPE	BUILDING NUMBER	DATE OF OCCUPANCY
<u>ELDERLY/ HANDICAPPED</u>				
Chestnut Court Apts.	30	State	667-1	1962
Ann Whalen Apts.	80	State	667-2	1975
Jean Elder House	23	State-Private	667-3	1980
<u>FAMILY</u>				
Watson Farms Apts.	15	Federal	085-1	1982
Stanley St.	2	State	705-2	1988
Jenks St.	4	State	705-3	1989
Olympia Drive	4	State	705-1	1992
Fairfield St.	6	State	705-1	1992
Bridge St./Market Hill	6	State	705-1	1992
99 Bridge Street	4	Private	Section 8 vouchers	2003
<u>HANDICAPPED</u>				
John C. Nutting	5	State	689-1	1981
Moreau House	8	State	698-2	1990

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS UNDER CONTRACT

NAME OF PROGRAM	UNITS	TYPE
Section 8 Rental	413	Federal
Mass. Voucher Program	20 units	State

Maintenance/Capital Improvements

The maintenance staff prepared 17 vacancies for occupancy and completed 754 work orders. The staff also maintains the grounds and buildings at the Authority's twelve properties.

The Authority completed the following capital improvement projects: range hood replacement, parking lot improvements, air conditioning and automatic door opener egress button installation, boiler upgrades, and replacement of flooring, carpeting, and bathrooms fans.

Management

In 2003, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development designated the Authority, yet again, as a high performer. We received a 96% score on the HUD's Public Housing Assessment System Program. This program evaluates Housing Authorities in four areas: physical inspections of property, financial reporting, resident satisfaction, and management capability.

The Authority renewed its contract for Executive Director services with the Hampshire County Regional Housing Authority.

The Authority processed 1,063 new applications during the year and maintained combined waiting list totals of 1,101 applicants. This includes 663 applications that the Authority processed as part of the Section 8 state-wide central waiting list. That list currently has 47,348 applications on it.

AHA staff processed 171 income recertifications and signed leases with 17 new households residing in AHA-owned property.

Rental Assistance Programs

The AHA administers three rental assistance programs: the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) and the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP), both funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development. Both programs permit eligible households to occupy privately owned units. The Authority pays part of the monthly rent directly to the owner. Over 90 local owners participate in the programs.

In 2003, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development designated the Authority as a high performer; we received a 100% score on the HUD's Section 8 Management Assessment Program.

AHA staff issued 59 Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers, completed 603 income recertifications and leased 43 new families on the program. The Authority also completed 19 MRVP and AHVP income recertifications.

The Housing Inspector conducted 751 inspections. These inspections included annual, move-in, and special inspections of units leased through the Section 8 and conventional housing programs.

In December 2003, the AHA surveyed rental units in Amherst.

Rental Market Survey Results

Bedroom Size	# of Units surveyed	Median rent (50% percentile)*
One	648	\$787.00
Two	1,088	\$949.00
Three	435	\$1,337.00
Four	45	\$2,000.00
Total	2,216**	

*Please note: these are gross rents; they include utility allowances for tenant- paid utilities.

**Units surveyed were multi-family apartment complexes; units in single, duplex, or triplex rental units were not used. This market data is very difficult to obtain.

Vacancy Rate

Of the 2,216 units, 26 were vacant; thus, vacancy rate was 1.1%.

Resident Services

The Support Service Program, through its Coordinator, arranges for counseling, individual assessments, support, and crisis intervention to elderly/handicapped residents. The program also provides a number of educational forums for residents.

Ann Whalen Tenant Organization sponsors meetings, workshops, and social events for all Ann Whalen residents.